

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 24TH-25TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

WEDDED (ROMANS 7:1-6)

"...THOSE WHO KNOW THE LAW"

Paul is now addressing the Jews in the Roman church, which is critical to know for our context. The Jews were fighting for the law to take priority in their community.

- Paul is saying the law isn't our king, Jesus is! Nothing can be King over Jesus. Nothing else can save us. Who is our King? What is taking priority for us?

AN EXAMPLE

Paul gives an example to prove His point: marriage. The covenant of marriage legally binds a husband and wife together. Marriage isn't about one person ruling over the other, it's about obedience to the covenant!

- This is why lust is so bad: it violates the covenant! So long as our spouse is alive, we are bound to them.

MARRIED TO CHRIST

In the same way, The Law only showed us sin. Being married to The Law means being married to what it reveals: sin. Yet, Jesus died to conquer sin in order to be married to His creation once again – the bride.

- **The Christian life, like marriage, is a long deliberate love. Jesus will never leave us; for better and worse.**

BEARING "FRUIT FOR GOD"

Jesus commits to us so we can bear fruit for His Kingdom! Salvation is not about our Heaven ticket being punched, it's about the Kingdom coming. **We are saved to bring Heaven to Earth: peace, hope, love.**

- Are we bearing fruit for God's Kingdom? Are we making an impact? Or have we made it about ourselves?

The alternative is brokenness. Without being wedded to Jesus, we're in trouble. God is love, light, and purity. We are not. We bear God's image, but it's distorted. And since the fall of humanity, we have been in the Adamic state (Rom 5), which is the flesh.

- **Are we living in that flesh right now? Are we following our own sinful?**

"THE NEWNESS OF THE SPIRIT..."

However, the Good News that we will get to (and Paul tells us all about in this letter) is our Heavenly Father restores us back to our true image through Jesus' death and resurrection.

- **When we believe in the Gospel, we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We can only live pure lives when we submit and are obedient to the Spirit, which guides us.**

INSIDIOUS (ROMANS 7:7-13)

IS THE LAW SIN?

The question is then, is God's Law negative? "No!" Paul says. In fact, Jesus said, "Not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass away from The Law until all things are accomplished." (Mt 5:18)

- The Law was given to show how far from God we were. After we broke the first command, we needed a signpost.

THE COMMANDS

The Law showed humanity, through Israel, how selfish, self-centered, murderous, unfaithful, and unloving we are. It shined a bright light and revealed to us how terrible and corrosive sin is. I hope we recognize that.

- **God's Law is good because it exposes and creates boundaries. Yet, like an enraged animal, sin attacks when seen.**

"...SEIZING AN OPPORTUNITY"

Sin is a powerful force. Twice Paul says it seized opportunities through The Law to bring death. Jesus says it like this: "The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy." (John 10:10)

- **We simply cannot take sin lightly. It's cunning and baffling. It can distort God's Law and manipulate us. Is there any sin we are playing around with?**

SIN PRODUCES DEATH

Sin will bring us to Hell, in this life and the next. If we allow sin to take root in our lives it will destroy us. Has anyone experienced this?

- Sin causes isolation, depression, broken relationships, addictions, lies, rage, and an immense amount of pain. That's just in this life. **However, we do not have to spend eternity there!**

THE BATTLE (ROMANS 7:14-25)

"I AM OF THE FLESH..."

Who is the "I" in this passage? There are several different interpretations:

- -It's Paul before His life in Christ.
- -It's Paul, as a Christian, and he is relaying his continual struggling with sin (some like this because they can relate to it).
- -Others believe Paul is using a well-known rhetorical device. He's the persona of.

PERSONA NON GRATA

I believe the third interpretation is correct. Paul is relaying the persona of the flesh trying to be saved through The Law (Adamic state).

- The reason for this belief is that Paul, throughout this letter, says life in Jesus is about freedom, not conflicted struggle. **This does not mean we are perfect. It does mean Jesus is greater than sin and can free us.**

IMAGE BEARERS

Furthermore, God created us in His image. We were supposed to be holy, pure, and good. The fall of humanity skewed that, and sin ruled us. But God sees our potential and wants to restore us. So much so, that He came to earth and died for us.

- **This is why God is pained when we choose our way. Sin may have made us wretched, but in Jesus we don't have to.**

THE PROBLEM

This is what Paul is getting at with the Jewish group in Rome, and it echoes to us today: **it is impossible to reach our potential through human effort.** It doesn't matter how great the tool is that we might use to try either.

- The mosaic Law was the most spiritual tool of all-time, but it fell short, because sin holds us captive in our flesh.

THE TWISTING GRIP OF SIN

If we try to be good, holy, and pure on our own we end up in a bind. We end up doing confusing, sometimes hurtful things. We can even hate what we do and still do it!

- **Why? Because Paul says earlier, sin is a powerful force that will take every opportunity to destroy us. Israel found themselves there, and so can we.**

KNOWING WHAT'S WRONG

We can recognize there is something wrong within us and in the world around us. We all do, that's why people call for justice.

- **-Paul argues because of this, we admit God's Law is good. It speaks the truth clearly: don't steal, murder, and lie. We can know there is a moral authority, but that is only half of the battle.**

ALL TOGETHER

Whether we know God's Law or not, we are all in the same boat: trapped by sin and its results. That was true for the Jews, Romans, pagans, and it's true for us. Even if we do know God's Law and agree that it is right and good, in the flesh we will always helplessly battle sin.

- **Paul asks this question for us all: "who will rescue me from this body of death?"**

"JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!"

Hopefully, this doesn't come as too much of a surprise, but **Jesus is our only hope!** Yet, it's more than a flippant answer. Jesus conquered sin and death on a cross!

- **If we believe this, it means we are submitted to Jesus – he's our King, our Lord. We can't fix ourselves through efforts of the flesh. Do we believe and trust in Jesus?**

THERE IS HOPE!

We aren't ever hopeless! In Jesus we can have peace of mind, freedom, genuine love, and purity. It's a process (sanctification), but it's possible when we submit to King Jesus.

- **Jesus' work on the cross was an explosion into history. Jesus defeated sin. There is something life-changing about falling in love and being wedded to Him.**

SUBMISSION

- Following Jesus is an either-or proposal, it's a covenant, just like marriage.
- What if we treated marriage like we do Jesus? I'll spend time together when it's convenient for me, when I have time.
- Have we made a definitive choice to be wedded with Jesus? Do we believe and are we committed to His ways?

CONFESSION

- The Church is the bride of Christ, Jesus' body. Sin is defeated and has no power in this place! It's the hope of the world.
- This is the place where we can confess. It's rewarded here, not punished.
- Do we need to confess something today? In the light, through Christ, sin no longer holds any power over us.

PRODUCING FRUIT

- When we are saved from our sin, we are called to bear fruit for God.
- What are we doing to build for God's Kingdom, and to help others be free from sin? This is discipleship.
- We have a powerful Savior that is redeeming the world from sin. As His followers, we're a part of that work!